

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS
FOR THE NIH INTRAMURAL-TO-INDIA (I-to-I) PROGRAM
UNDER THE U.S.-INDIA COLLABORATION ON PREVENTION OF
SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND HIV/AIDS**

BACKGROUND:

In June 2006, the Indian Minister of Health and Family Welfare and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) signed a Joint Statement for Collaboration on Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS to promote cooperative research and research training focused on HIV/AIDS.

The Joint Statement calls for the development of strategic plans for collaboration and to facilitate the expedited review and clearance of proposed bilateral projects. Both the United States of America and India have earmarked funds to support joint research and training activities pursued under this program. The lead U.S. agency identified to implement activities under this program is the HHS National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the lead Indian agency is the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

Recognizing NIH's broad intramural expertise in HIV/AIDS research, the NIH Office of AIDS Research (OAR) piloted the NIH Intramural-to-India (I-to-I) Program to promote collaborations between NIH intramural scientists and co-investigators in Indian research institutions. The I-to-I Program was launched in fiscal year (FY) 2007 to support one-year pilot projects from NIH intramural scientists to enhance existing or initiate collaborative research projects with investigators in Indian research institutions.

DESCRIPTION:

For FY 2010/2011, the I-to-I Program is soliciting collaborative research projects focusing on research and research training in HIV-related co-morbidities. Proposals that include a short-term scientist exchange are encouraged. Each proposal can request support from NIH for a maximum of \$100,000 per year. Support will be for a maximum of two years. We anticipate that approximately five awards will be supported; total U.S. and Indian funding of 1 million dollars per year (\$500,000 from the U.S. and \$500,000 from India).

A similar Call for Proposals will be issued by ICMR and DBT for Indian investigators under this program. **NIH intramural and Indian scientists who will be conducting a collaborative research project under this program must jointly draft and submit an application with identical content to NIH and ICMR/DBT.** Applications should be in line with application forms and administrative and financial procedures required by each funding entity separately. Awards to Indian investigators will be provided by ICMR and/or DBT.

Justification for the short-term scientific exchange should be provided, clearly outlining the need for such an exchange in the context of the research objectives proposed. The short-term scientist exchange proposal must be a component of the proposed research project, and total costs for the research and scientific exchange components should not exceed \$100,000 total cost. **A stand alone short-term scientist exchange proposal without a research proposal will not be accepted.**

The short-term-scientist exchange component can not be used to support Indian researchers who are already in an NIH intramural laboratory or who have been previously identified for support from other sources. The exchange may be from one week to six months in duration. (Note: This program provides support only for the Indian researcher; no support will be provided for family members, financial or documentary.) Under this Call for Proposal, NIH intramural scientists are eligible for short-term visits that are limited to one month in duration.

FOCUS:

In 2007, a workshop on Clinical and Translational Research for Prevention and Treatment of Co-morbidities Associated with HIV Infection was held as part of the U.S.-India Joint Program. The workshop focused on five thematic areas: tuberculosis (TB), neurological manifestations, malignancies, diarrheal diseases, and antiretroviral-related adverse events. Workshop participants also focused on particular populations, including women and children, and developed a set of research priorities in each of the themes that could be used to guide future research. The workshop thus provided an initial assessment of the burden of co-morbidities in HIV-infected men, women, and children in India and highlighted potential research themes. The Joint Working Group (JWG) continues to be committed in supporting activities related to HIV-related co-morbidities.

In line with this focus, the FY 2010/2011 I-to-I program will emphasize developing and expanding collaborations between NIH intramural investigators and Indian investigators in studies directed at preventing, treating, and ameliorating HIV-related co-morbidities such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), malignancies, metabolic complications, and opportunistic infections (OIs) in adults, children, or both. Proposals in the area of HIV-associated co-morbidities may include, but are not limited to, research in the following areas:

- Systematic gathering of information on incidence/prevalence of HIV-associated malignancies;
- Laboratory, clinical, or population-based studies aimed at understanding the risks, co-factors, and region specific patterns of HIV-associated co-morbidities and malignancies;
- Improvement and rapid diagnosis of TB and characterization of drug resistant Mycobacteria in HIV-infected patients;
- Studies in TB immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome;
- Viral and host genetic factors involved in HIV-associated co-morbidities;

- Development of sensitive and specific evaluation methods for HIV-related neurological disorders that can be compared across countries;
- Development of rapid diagnostics for HIV-associated diarrheal diseases;
- Studies in understanding the risks and treatment-seeking practices in patients with HIV-associated diarrhea;
- Development of cost-effective screening for STIs, and cervical and anal cancers in HIV-infected individuals;
- Collection of prospective data on types and prevalence of ART-related adverse events and metabolic complications; and
- Studies focused on understanding the molecular underpinnings of HIV-associated co-morbidities.

ELIGIBILITY:

NIH intramural investigators who are currently collaborating with an Indian investigator and would like to propose a **new** project or who would like to develop a new collaboration with an investigator from an Indian institution are eligible.

NOTE: Each NIH intramural scientist may submit only one proposal.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FY 2010-2011 PROPOSALS:

Proposals are to be submitted electronically as a PDF attachment to:

Ms. Gail Wolfson
Office of AIDS Research
wolfsong@mail.nih.gov

Proposals submitted should include a letter or email affirming the endorsement/approval of the IC Scientific Director or their Designee.

Research proposals submitted by the NIH intramural investigator must contain the following:

- Abstract of the project that describes the research, need, and significance of the proposed study.
- Research plan that includes a description of the project, monitoring plans if required, and expected outcomes. The research described must be a new initiative; this initiative is not intended to replace or supplement funding for ongoing projects.
- **Research proposal should not exceed five pages;** this limit does not include the abstract, references, collaboration plan, or the budget.
- Letter from the Indian collaborator describing his/her activities and specific role in the project and their anticipated budget.
- Biosketch from the Principal Investigator (PI) and Indian Co-PI.

- **Collaboration Plan.** Information describing any previous collaborations with the Indian investigator and:
 - Introduction on how this proposal was stimulated as a result of the availability of this special program and how this collaboration could evolve into a longer lasting collaboration or how it will aid in developing new collaborations;
 - Description of the added-value synergy that the collaborative partnership aims to incur during the period of the award;
 - Description of the responsibilities of the NIH intramural investigator and the Indian collaborator; and
 - Description of technology transfer, if appropriate.

NOTE: NIH intramural and Indian scientists that apply for funding under this program must jointly draft and submit an application with identical content to NIH and ICMR/DBT.

Short-term scientist exchange proposal also must include (Please note: The short-term scientist exchange proposal must be a component of the proposed research project. A stand alone short-term scientist exchange proposal without a research proposal will not be accepted.):

- Description of the visit and how it will promote or enhance collaborations between the NIH intramural laboratory and the Indian counterpart.
- A letter of application and a one- to three-page description of the collaborative research project to be undertaken in the sponsor's laboratory, specifying what is to be accomplished and indicating tentative dates for the visit.
- A letter of invitation from the chief of the hosting laboratory.
- A short curriculum vitae, including full contact information, identification of three scientists willing to serve as references, and no more than five publications.
- When the exchange is for an Indian investigator to come to an NIH intramural laboratory, the visit may be from one week to six months in duration.
 - The NIH will provide Indian researchers accepted into this program with the necessary resources to cover per diem and laboratory supplies and reagents while at the NIH laboratory.
 - **ICMR or DBT will pay for travel for all Indian researchers.**
 - **Salary support would be provided by the Indian participant's home institution.**
 - The program provides health insurance during the short-term visit. Coverage is for the awardees only and does not cover pre-existing conditions.

- The Indian investigator will receive a letter from NIH with which to apply for a visa at the American Embassy or Consulate in India.
- Indian investigators must include a letter of assurance by the candidate that he/she will return to India at the end of the exchange.
- The candidates must have a minimum of one-year postdoctoral experience in HIV/AIDS-related research.
- Candidates also must be proficient in spoken and written English.
- NIH intramural scientists also can participate in the short-term scientist exchange component; however, this exchange may not exceed one month.
 - **The NIH scientist can not receive salary or per diem from the Indian government.**
 - The Indian laboratory would provide the resources to cover supplies and reagents for the NIH intramural investigator while in the Indian laboratory.

BUDGET:

- **Research proposal:** Budget must include details for equipment, supplies, and services.
 - Equipment purchase must not exceed \$50,000 over the two-year award.
- **Short-term scientist exchange:** Budget must include details of costs associated with the short-term scientist exchange; these must be part of the award.
 - A detailed budget (in Rupees) describing the laboratory costs (e.g., reagents and supplies) associated with an NIH intramural scientist visiting an Indian laboratory must be included separately. This budget will be evaluated by the U.S.-India Joint Working Group and agency-specific personnel

REVIEW:

Applications will be reviewed by ad hoc expert panels with the appropriate expertise in HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV-related co-morbidities. After the initial review by ICMR and DBT scientists in India and NIH scientists in the U.S., final funding decisions will be made by the JWG of the U.S.-India Collaboration on Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS. Successful applicants will be notified by the NIH Office of AIDS Research, following the JWG review. Highest priority will be given to proposals focused on research and research training projects in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and co-morbidities.

Successful applicants may need to provide additional information or clarification, if requested by reviewers.

Applications will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- Scientific merit and quality.
- Feasibility of the proposal.
- Relevance to the scope and intent of the U.S.-India Collaborative Research Program.
- Strength of existing or proposed collaboration.
- Impact on developing a new area for collaboration.
- Likelihood that the proposed project will achieve its proposed goal(s).
- Applicant's past scientific record, as described in the Biosketch.
- Appropriateness of the total budget (i.e., research and short-term scientist exchange) in accomplishing the research collaboration.

Awardees will be required to submit a two-page Summary Report of the outcomes of the proposal to the Office of AIDS Research within 90 days after completion of the project.

TIME LINE:

Proposal Submission Deadline:	August 31, 2010
Review	October 2010 - January 2011
Award Notification:	March 2011

INQUIRIES:

Direct inquiries regarding the I-to-I Program to:

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